THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • FRIDAY • MAY 6, 2022 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 34 • LATE CITY EDITION

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ARTICLE 19 CAN'T BE INVOKED AGAINST PRIVATE FIRM: META

Freedom of speech can't be invoked against a private company like Meta, its lawyers told the Delhi High Court on Thursday

ACCOUNT SUSPENDED FOR VIOLATING CONTRACT

Meta was responding to a petition filed by Wokeflix—which publishes political satire over social media—against the suspension of its account by Meta-owned Instagram for violating the platform's "community guidelines". Meta said Instagram users enter into a contract with it when they sign up to use it, and action was taken against Wokeflix for violating the said contract

META MAY HAVE VIOLATED IT RULES, 2021

- Responding to Wokeflix's claim it was not informed or given an opportunity to be heard before its account was suspended, Meta said the user is entitled to be heard only once the action is taken
- However, the Centre had told the court in March that rules require big social media firms to notify users before taking action | P9

May 17

WHEN THE COURT HEARS MORE PETITIONS AGAINST ACTIONS BY SOCIAL MEDIA FIRMS

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4.7mn more Covid deaths in India, says WHO

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

INDIA saw 4.7 million more Covid-19 deaths by 2021-end, which is 10 times the official figures of half a million and almost a third of Covid deaths globally, according to estimates put out by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Thursday. Shortly thereafter, the Union government issued a strong rebuttal questioning the validity and robustness of the models used by the global health body and its methodology of data collection.

WHO estimates suggest the full toll associated directly or indirectly with the pandemic (described as excess mortality) between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2021 was approximately 14.9 million (range 13.3-16.6 million).

Excess mortality is calculated as the difference between the number of deaths that have occurred and the number that would be expected in the absence of the pandemic based on data from earlier years. Excess mortality includes deaths associated with Covid-19 directly or indirectly due to the pandemic's impact on health systems and society.

India saw the largest absolute excess mortality numbers as compared to any other country in the world. The estimates put around 8,30,000 excess deaths in 2020 and 3.9 million in 2021 — most of them during the second wave. Men accounted for 57% of the estimated excess deaths. As many as 78% of the excess deaths were in the 60-plus age group.

The health ministry strongly pushed back, saying "Despite India's objection to the process, methodology, and outcome of this modelling exercise, WHO has released the excess mortality estimates without adequately addressing India's concerns."

India told the WHO that in view of the availability of authentic data published through Civil Registration System by the Registrar General of India, mathematical models should not be used for projecting excess mortality data.

Most of the excess deaths (84%) are concentrated in South-East Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

TAKE YOUR SHOT

May 4 **12,04,711 doses**
May 5 **14,41,596 doses**
TOTAL: 1,80,70,28,542

NATIONWIDE	MAY 4	MAY 5
Fresh cases	3,205	3,275
Recoveries	2,802	3,010
Deaths	31	55

KARNATAKA	MAY 4	MAY 5
Fresh cases	148	159
Recoveries	162	138
Deaths	0	0

Delimitation done, J&K poll clock ticks

Two nominated seats for Pandits part of panel's final report

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

DECKS were cleared on Thursday for the first-ever Assembly polls in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir after the final Delimitation Commission report rejected objections of three of the five associate members and Kashmir-based parties on redrawing its constituencies.

Elections can be expected within the next five to six months.

The commission allotted six additional seats to the Jammu region and only one to Kashmir, though the latter has 15 lakh more population. Also, nine constituencies for were reserved for Scheduled Tribes for the first time in J&K's history.

Two nominated Assembly seats for Kashmiri Pandits and some seats for refugees from Pakistan occupied Kashmir were part of the recommendations of the commission headed by Justice (retd) Ranjana Prakash Desai with Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra and J&K State Election Commissioner K K Sharma as members.

One of the nominated Pandits should be a female, the panel recommended. It suggested such members be given powers at par with that of nominated members of the Puducherry Assembly.

The panel's report was notified and published in the Gazette.

In the outgoing J&K Assembly comprising 87 seats, Kashmir had 46 seats, Jammu 37 and Ladakh 4. In all, J&K will have five parliamentary constituencies with 18 Assembly seats in each of them. The Anantnag-Pulwama seat in south Kashmir has been renamed as Anantnag-Poonch. It will now comprise three south Kashmir districts and the border districts of Poonch and Rajouri of the Jammu region.

J&K Delimitation Commission members Ranjana Prakash Desai, Sushil Chandra (L) and K K Sharma, in New Delhi on Thursday | PTI

FINAL DEAL

90 seats in all in J&K

43 Total seats in Jammu

47 Total seats in Kashmir region

6 additional seats allotted to Jammu

1 additional seat allotted to Kashmir

ST quota
Jammu: 6 seats
Kashmir: 3 seats

SC reservation
Jammu: 7
Kashmir: 0

5 Lok Sabha seats

18 Assembly seats in each parliamentary constituency

Nine of the existing Assembly constituencies have been changed. Following suggestions from political parties and the public, the panel renamed Tangmarg seat as Gulmarg, Zoonimar as Zaidibal, Sonwar as Lal Chowk, Padder as Padder-Nagseni, Kathua North as Jasrota, Kathua South as Kathua, Khour as Chhamb, Mahore as Gulabhgarh and Darhal as Budhal.

Besides, some existing Assembly seats were deleted and new constituencies created.

J&K has been under Central rule since mid-June, 2018 when the BJP withdrew support to the Mehbooba-led PDP-BJP coalition government.

The Delimitation Commission was set up in March 2020 to redraw the Assembly and parliamentary constituencies in J&K after Article 370 was hollowed out and the state bifurcated into two Union Territories. On March 14 this year, the panel put its interim report in public domain and invited objections and suggestions.

Day after RBI's rate hike, banks up interest on loans

RAM SAHGAL @ Mumbai

COMMERCIAL banks on Thursday started increasing their lending and deposit rates a day after the RBI raised the repo rate — the rate at which it lends to banks.

While ICICI Bank, Bank of Baroda and DCB Bank were among the first to raise repo-linked lending rates, Kotak Mahindra Bank raised the deposit rates by 30-35 basis points.

This will make home, auto and SME loans costlier by 40 basis points (0.4 percentage point) as banks pass on their increased costs of funds to fresh and existing borrowers.

ICICI Bank said that its external benchmark lending rate or I-EBLR is referenced to the RBI Policy Repo Rate with a mark-up over the rate at 8.10% effective May 4.

Bank of Baroda on Thursday raised retail loans linked with Baroda Linked Lending Rate to 6.9%, which is at a 250-basis point mark-up over the repo rate.

DCB Bank also hiked its EBLR from 8.44% to 8.84% and EBLR for home loan to 8.56%, up by 40 bps.

The RBI on Wednesday raised the repo rate by 40 bps to 4.4% to contain inflationary pressures.

CONTINUED ON: P16

HOLE STORY

Border Security Force personnel inspect a suspected underground tunnel detected near the India-Pakistan international border in the Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday | PTI

'By switching parties, Horatti violating statute'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

LEADER of Opposition in the Council BK Hariprasad on Thursday hit out at Upper House Chairman Basavaraj Horatti for "violating" the Constitution by announcing his decision to join the BJP while holding office. The Congress leader said this conduct of Horatti comes under the ambit of the Anti-Defection Law.

Horatti had recently met Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the latter's visit to Bengaluru and announced his decision to join the BJP. Horatti, who was with the JDS, is likely to be the BJP candidate for the upcoming MLC polls from West Teachers' constituency.

"A person is free to join any party, but after the Anti-Defection law came into effect, anyone (elected representative) joining the other party or making such a statement, comes under the ambit of the 10th Schedule. He has said he will resign as Chairman on May 11 and join the BJP, it is against the Constitution," he added, demanding Horatti's resignation.

"A similar situation arose when Rajya Sabha member Sharad Yadav said he would join the RJD. Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu used that statement of Yadav to disqualify him," Hariprasad said.

CONTINUED ON: P4

CID ARRESTS TWO MORE COPS IN PSI SCAM

RAMKRISHNA BADSESHI @Kalaburagi

As the CID intensifies its probe into the PSI-CET scam, the alleged connivance of police officials with the racketeers has led to the arrest of two more police officials, including a DySP rank officer, on Thursday.

CID sleuths grilled DySP Mallikarjun Sali of of Lingsugur, Raichur district, and inspector Anand Metre (Fingerprints, Kalaburagi) for over 10 hours on Wednesday and Thursday, and arrested both in the afternoon. Government counsel of third JMFC Court Shivasharanappa told TNIE that "the duo was produced before the judge who remanded them to 8 days in police custody". The accused are facing charges of helping one of the main accused, RD Patil. Patil is facing charges of helping candidates write the PSI-CET held last October using Bluetooth devices.

With the arrest of Sali and Metre, the total number of arrests has touched 31. While 28 arrests (including Sali and Metre) were made in connection with the PSI-CET scam at Jnana Jyoti English Medium School Centre, the remaining three arrests were in connection with the scam at MSI Degree College.

Raichur SP Nikhal B said, "To complete the formalities, a report will be sought on the arrest of Mallikarjun Sali. It would be sent to the Director General of Police directly."

The DGP has already issued orders suspending DySP (Fingerprints) RR Hosmani and Women's Police Station inspector, Kalaburagi, Dileep Sagar. Kalaburagi police commissioner suspended constable Rudregowda on Wednesday. CID is yet to quiz Hosamani and Dileep, sources said.

EXPRESS READ

CAA will be implemented after Covid subsides, claims Shah

Kolkata: Touring West Bengal, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the CAA will be implemented once the Covid wave subsides. Launching a blistering attack on the Trinamool government, Shah said, "The TMC is misleading people by saying we (Centre) will not be able to implement the CAA." | P10

SC to examine if pleas against sedition law need larger bench

New Delhi: The Supreme Court said that it will examine whether petitions challenging the sedition law need to be refer-red to a larger bench and granted time to the Centre to file its response. "Validity of the section is an open vista. We will hear you on that, but we need to decide first whether we should hear it in the 3,5, or 7-judge composition," the bench said | P9

BBMP Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta transferred

Bengaluru: In a major reshuffle, the State government on Thursday announced a series of transfers. However, the transfer of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) chief commissioner Gaurav Gupta has caught the attention as its just been a year after he took charge. Tushar Girinath has been appointed as the new BBMP chief commissioner | P2

SMOOTH AS SILK

Cosmetics straight from the cocoon

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA, a leader in silk manufacturing and popular for its silk saris, is now working on being number one to show that nothing is waste in silk — not even sericin, the protein which is extracted in the yarn and fibre stage, and discarded due to its unwanted effects on the quality of the textile.

Sericin, a protein created by Bombyx mori (silkworms) in the production of silk, is normally removed as it blocks penetration of chemicals into the fibres. This results in making fibres harsh and stiff. Therefore, removing sericin is an important step in getting get a proper material for textile.

But now, after a two-year-long study, researchers from Karnataka State Sericulture Research and Development Institute (KSSRDI) are set to launch 12 cosmetic products made from sericin — all organic, good for the skin and health. That is not all, the institute is also working on inviting companies to showcase the technology to commercially launch the products in the market.

Organic soaps made with sericin, a protein created by silkworms

"People assume that sericulture is only about silk cocoons that end up in saris. But that is not true. A lot of by-products can be made and we have just done a portion of it. When a yarn is made into fabric, there is 32 per cent wastage. Of this, 25 per cent is sericin, which is very rich in protein and it can be mixed with other natural ingredients to make products," Dr PG Radhakrishna, Director, KSSRDI, told *The New Indian Express*.

CONTINUED ON: P5

COVID

60 days on ventilator causes rare disorder

A hospital in Bengaluru successfully operated on a 32-year-old techie with rare excess bone formation in his hips and right elbow, related to Covid-19 infection during the second wave | P3

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